

*These are the instructions you will receive with your free seeds.*

## CHIA SEED for trial planting

Enclosed is about 1 gram (about 770 seeds) of chia, *Salvia hispanica*.

- See website and links here for more info:  
<http://www.ars.usda.gov/pandp/docs.htm?docid=19317>
- This seed is untreated and approved as food. But, don't eat it, plant it!
- We want to see what your results are, no matter what the outcome!
- We're sending seed out free because we want to see how this plant grows as a pollinator resource and as a warm-weather cover crop for suppression of weeds.

**Basic instructions for starting chia:** Sow shallowly after danger of frost has passed. Barely cover and keep moist; may be planted in pots to transplant as well.

Chia is a tall annual in the mint family. Many mints are great bee plants but many (not chia!) are also aggressive perennials which will take over gardens. Chia is sun-loving; plan for it like you would a sunflower. A spacing of at least 4 inches (10cm) all around is best to give the plant room to branch out as it grows. Once established it can take some drought and will signal its need for water by slowly starting to wilt. In about 60 days of warm weather the flower buds will start to show and at 90 days handsome sky-blue flowering heads. But these are estimates based only on limited experience, and we need phenology data from your planting! Given a sufficiently long season, chia will go to seed and self-sow; in Central America some consider it weedy. For cover cropping in late summer here in Maryland, we have had good luck with 5 lbs/acre which corresponds to an all-around seed spacing of 2 inches; the primary interest with this spacing is weed suppression.

Information to send back to Don Weber ([Don.Weber@ARS.USDA.GOV](mailto:Don.Weber@ARS.USDA.GOV)):

1. Planting date – if multiple list all dates, and keep track of plant stages for each planting.
2. Location, send an address or a precise latitude & longitude if possible
3. Setting (sun, partial shade, etc.) and soil notes
4. Height at 2 weeks, 4 weeks, 8 weeks (photos are great!)
5. Time and height at first flowering
6. Pollinator notes: collect specimens and send to Sam ([sdroege@usgs.gov](mailto:sdroege@usgs.gov)) and/or take photos
7. When did it stop flowering?
8. Did it set seed? When?
9. Did it get damaged or killed by frost?
10. Did you notice or suspect any other damage by insects, disease, etc.? (photos)